

REMARKS

The office action of November 18, 2003, has been carefully considered.

It is noted that claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph.

Claims 1-6 and 9-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) over German reference DE 197 45 149 ('149).

Finally, it is noted that claims 7 and 8 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

In view of the Examiner's rejection of the claims applicant has amended independent claim 1.

It is respectfully submitted that the claims now on file particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Applicant has amended claim 1 to clearly recite that the electronic components are encapsulated water-tightly and are arranged in a carrier open at

the top. The carrier is arranged within the handle formed of the U-shaped shell and the front strip. In other words, the water-tight encapsulation of the electronic components is a feature separate from the open top of the carrier.

In view of these considerations it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph is overcome and should be withdrawn.

It is respectfully submitted that the claims now on file differ essentially and in an unobvious manner from the constructions disclosed in the reference.

Turning now to the reference, it can be seen that this reference discloses a vehicle door handle. This reference was discussed in detail in the last filed amendment and that discussion is incorporated herein by reference. The reference teaches that the carrier is formed by the shells of the handle. In the presently claimed invention, on the other hand, the carrier is arranged within the handle formed by the U-shaped shell and the front strip. A construction having this feature is not disclosed by DE '149.

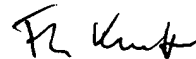
In view of these considerations, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claims 1-6 and 9-12 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) over the above-discussed reference is overcome and should be withdrawn.

Reconsideration and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested.

Any additional fees or charges required at this time in connection with this application may be charged to Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 11-1835.

Respectfully submitted,

By



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**CERTIFICATE OF MAILING**

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, PO Box 1450 Arlington, VA 22313-1450, on January 30, 2004.

By:



Friedrich Kueffner

Date: January 30, 2004